ale

CAMRA

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter Issue 415 December 2025

Cambridge CAMRA Winter Beer Festival 2025 A Return To Where It All Began

Cambridge Corn Exchange 10-13 December

Alan Hudleston: Pub Artist

Contents:

Pub News
Alan Hudleston: Pub Artist
An Elysian View
The CAMRA Cambridge Beer Festival
Three Beer Festivals in Three Days?
Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)
Apples and Pears
Paws for thought

The Cambridge Blue

A Real Ale Paradise

up to 14 cask ales on hand pump or straight from the cask, plus 12 world beers on tap, and 120 bottled beers, and real cider as well!

Xmas is coming to the Blue

6th Dec 12-1630 Bring the kids to see Santa & his Real Live Reindeer.

13th Dec 19.30 Upbeat Big Band.

20th Dec 19.00 Cottenham Brass Band.

All events in Festive Marquee

Opening Hours
noon-11pm Monday–Saturday and noon-10.30pm on Sunday

Food Service
Sunday–Thursday noon-9.30pm
Friday & Saturday noon-10pm

CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE ★ 2026 ★ WE'RE IN IT

85-87 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
CB1 2LG **01223 471680**
the-cambridgeblue.co.uk
TheCambridgeBlue
@Cambridge_Blue

Pub News

Welcome to ALE 415! May we wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and happy new year. Do try to make sure that you celebrate at least part of it by visiting your local pub!

Let's catch up with some pub news:

The **Sun Inn, Waterbeach** has re-opened under new management, we have yet to visit but local reports suggest that the pub is still well worth a visit.

Tom Canning, landlord of the **Hare and Hounds, Harlton** has taken on management responsibilities of the award-winning Engineers Arms, Henlow.

He intends to remain in residence at the Hare and Hounds and will be supporting the Henlow pub management team from a distance.

Welcome to Mel and Chris, new licensees of the the **Railway Vue, Impington**.

The **Bell, Balsham** has reopened with new licensee Rich in charge.

The **Crown and Pipes, Fenstanton** having been closed for six years, is being taken over by Neil and Caroline. The couple are well known to Cambridge CAMRA, having run the **White Swan Conington** for many years before "retiring" a few years ago.

The **Artyst, Chesterton Road**, sporting decor in homage to Pink Floyd's Sid Barret, opened in October. A craft ale outlet, beers are from Brewboard brewery

A change of licensee at the the **Red Lion, Swaffham Prior** has not affected the quality of the beer. The only Bateman's pub in the CAMRA Cambridge and District area, it is still popular for its Bateman's dark mild.

Joel and Sam Palmer have told us that they will shortly be leaving the **Crown, Linton** after 37 years of service to the community. The pub has been purchased by the Trust Pub Company.

The **Dolphin, Melbourne** is under new management.

New management too at the **Waterman, Mitcham's Corner**. Beers here are all from Young's brewery.

The **Old Spring, Mitcham's Corner** now has four

Branch Diary

Don't forget that all Branch members are very welcome to attend the monthly business meetings, as well as our socials.

Tuesday 9th December Branch Meeting, Bath House, 3 Bene't Street, Cambridge
Wednesday 10th - Saturday 13th December Cambridge CAMRA Winter Beer Festival, Cambridge Corn Exchange
Saturday 20th December Strolling Social in Norwich
Tuesday 13th January Branch Meeting Byron's Bear, 3 Thompson's Lane, Cambridge
Saturday 24th January Minibus Tour of rural pubs
For a fuller list of local events please check **cambridge-camra.org.uk/events/**.

For Consumer Advice:
If you have a complaint about goods or services, please contact Citizens Advice for information and advice: Visit the Citizens Advice Website
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/
Or you can call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06
Please note: National Trading Standards cannot help members of the public with specific complaints or advice about goods, services or specific businesses.

Copyright CAMRA Cambridge & District Branch 2025. All rights reserved.
ALE is published by the Cambridge & District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale.
The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA Ltd or its Branches.

Edited by Will Smith, 32 Lovell Road, Cambridge, CB4 2QR. email: **will.smith@cambridge-camra.org.uk**
Printed by Zenith Print **zenithprint.co.uk**
Photo credits: Paul Treadaway and Helge Nareid.

To Advertise
To place an advert or enquire about our rate card please contact: Neil Richards - 01536 358670, n.richards@btinternet.com

Copy date next edition 5 January 2026
Publication date 26 January 2026

Pub News continued

real ales on tap.

The **Duke of Wellington, Willingham** has abruptly closed. The owners tell us it should shortly be re-opening.

The **Cambridge Brewhouse, King Street** has re-opened after refurbishment.

New licensees at the **Carlton Arms, Carlton Way.**

The **White Hart in Fulbourn** posted a reopening message on Facebook.

"*Our secret's out... The White Hart is re-opening in Fulbourn on November 21, 2025! We're so excited to bring a British grown, farm-to-fork menu to the Fulbourn community*".

We are very concerned about the **Earl of Beaconsfield, Mill Road**. The owners have tried to reassure us that the pub will re-open, but the building does seem to be falling into disrepair. A reflection perhaps of the difficulties all our pubs currently face

Cambridge CAMRA Pubs Officer Ali Cook recently wrote to Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner expressing our concerns. He received a comprehensive reply:

"*I appreciate the concerns you raise. Pubs make an enormous contribution to our economy and our society. They are an important part of our culture and heritage, and a crucial source of local employment. It is worrying that over 6,000 pubs and bars closed from 2010 to 2023, with many still struggling to recover from the pandemic, as well as having been hit by the cost-of-living crisis.*

I know that the Government is committed to supporting the pubs that are so important to our local communities, and took action last autumn to support them by cutting alcohol duty on draught products – which make up around 60% of the alcoholic drinks sold in pubs – reducing it by 1p per average strength pint. This came into effect in February 2025, and increases the relief available on draught products to 13.9%. It will reduce businesses' total duty bill by over £85 million a year. With regards to a further cut in duty charged on draught products, the Government keeps all areas of the tax system under review and makes decisions on tax policy at fiscal events. I know that the Government welcomes representations from the beer and pub sectors in advance of the Budget.

More broadly, the Government is working to support pubs through the Hospitality Support Scheme. Working with Pub is the Hub, the Government is providing funds to help community pubs adapt to changing local needs, ensuring these vital social hubs continue delivering for their communities.

I also recognise the concerns pubs have about business rates. Our business rates system disincentivises investment and creates uncertainty, and is particularly unfair on high street businesses. I welcome the Government's plan that from 2026-27, it will introduce permanently lower tax rates for hospitality properties. This will enable them to benefit from much-needed certainty and support, and will be funded by introducing a higher multiplier on the most valuable properties, such as the warehouses used by large online companies. I understand that the new levels will be announced at the 2025 Autumn Budget.

In the meantime, as you will know, hospitality businesses were facing a cliff edge in April, with temporary business rates reliefs due to expire. I therefore also welcome that the Government has offered a 40% discount to retail, hospitality and leisure properties up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business in 20256-26, as well as freezing the small business multiplier. This is a support package worth over £1.6 billion in 2025-26 and will save the average pub over £3,300 in 2025".

The licensees of the **Chequers, Cottenham** have asked us to remind you that they run a community pub that serves good food and maintains a very high standard of real ale. This was very true when I visited at the end of October.

A new craft ale bar in King Street, the **Handsome Prince**, is owned by Baron Brewing Company. It offers a wide range of craft ales from smaller breweries both from the UK and abroad.

We understand that the **St Radegund**, also King Street, will reopen as a wet led real ale pub before Christmas this year. We are certainly looking forward to that! The new owners received the keys to the building last month.

THE RAILWAY ARMS
COMMUNITY FREE HOUSE

Saffron Walden's First Community-Owned Pub

The no. 7 bus from Cambridge stops right outside our door

Open every day from midday

Large Beer Garden

Cask Ale, Craft Beer and Real Ciders all locally sourced

www.railwayarms.co.uk Tel: 01799 619660

CAMRA NW Essex Pub of the Year 2025, Essex Pub of the Year 2022

Give a gift membership to the beer lover in your life!

Beers are best shared with others. So, treat someone you like to a CAMRA gift membership and bring them along to the pubs and festivals that matter.

Set the membership to start on someone's special day!

They'll receive all the great discounts, benefits and vouchers you do, through the post. Cheers

Gift a membership today!
camra.org.uk/gift-membership

Pub News continued

And finally,

Just a reminder that we have a Winter Beer Festival this year. Returning to the Cambridge Corn Exchange, the venue where the very first ever CAMRA beer festival was held in 1974, we hope very much that you can join us. The festival begins at 5.00 on Wednesday 10th December and ends on Saturday 13th December. Visit our website for further details. [cambridgebeerfestival.com/.](cambridgebeerfestival.com/)

LEGENDARY BEER FROM HERTFORDSHIRE
DRAUGHT & BOTTLED BEER (INCLUDING PARTY SIZES)
T-SHIRTS, GIFTS & GOODIES
GIFT VOUCHERS
GOLDEN TOAD MEMBERSHIP
LOCAL PRODUCE
BREWERY TOURS
CIDER AND SPIRITS
ORDER ONLINE >>
In 2025 our Monthly Specials are raising funds and awareness for The Repair Shed
TRING BREWERY Co.
Dunsley Farm, London Road, Tring HP23 6HA
01442 890721 www.tringbrewery.co.uk

Alan Hudleston: Pub Artist

I first came across Alan Hudleston's work when I visited the Six Bells, Covent Garden, Cambridge. The Six Bells landlady, Eileen, is keen to support artists, and there are many examples of local work on display.

Alan's paintings drew my attention because he paints pubs.

I arranged to meet him in the Salisbury Arms, Tenison Road and he told me a bit about his passion for painting our local drinking establishments.

"I started painting pubs during the COVID lockdown" he told me. I realised the difficulties that pubs were in and wanted to have a painted record just in case the worst should happen and they were forced to close."

A CAMRA member, Alan first tried real ale when studying for his fine arts degree at Leicester School of Art. He is, he told me, heavily influenced by the Post Impressionist style of painting.

At first he concentrated on pubs close to where he lives in the Mill Road area of Cambridge, but when it became apparent that Cambridge tourists who liked his work were looking for paintings of the better known pubs such as the the Eagle, Benet Street (pictured) or the Champion of the Thames, King Street, and he added these to his portfolio.

It wasn't long before he had enough material to create a calendar which sold well in 2025. Our cover picture, taken from the 2026 calendar is of the Dobbler's Arms, Sturton Street, Cambridge.

Alan's calendars, and his original paintings are available from the Six Bells. The Calendar is priced at £12.00 - 10% of which is donated to a local charity.

It will also be available for sale at the membership stall of the Cambridge CAMRA Winter Beer Festival, Cambridge Corn Exchange, 10th-13th December 2025.

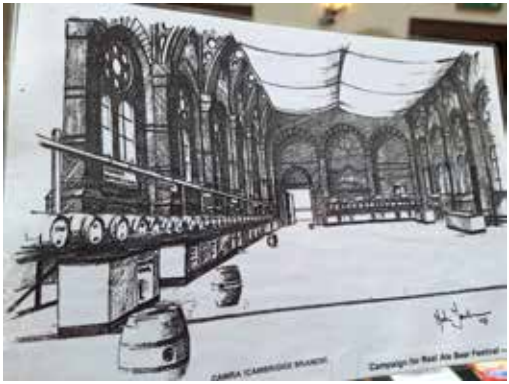
An Elysian View

Pub and Club guide for Ely and District.
In spring '25, the germ of an idea to produce maps showing all the pubs and clubs in the Ely and District CAMRA Branch area began to take shape. Initially, two maps were envisaged, one for each of Ely City and the Rural surrounds. Intrepid designer and CAMRA member, Max Durrell produced draft artwork, using research from WhatPub, websites etc. and obtained a licence to use maps. Branch committee and members were canvassed for their thoughts and ideas, and it was quickly realised that it would be simpler to have just one guide covering the whole area, to avoid duplication of "blurb" etc. The concept of an A3 size guide folded to a convenient pocketable leaflet was born. For completeness, all venues would be included, regardless of whether or not they sold real/cask ale or cider. Addresses, opening days and hours are shown, together with a key to facilities such as accommodation, food offer and dog friendliness! Anxious to publish coinciding with Cask Ale Week in September, work progressed apace. Hostelries were arranged into three areas – City, West and South, conveniently and coincidentally numbering 16 in each area! A cover page was designed and panels about "joining CAMRA", "Welcome", and "How to Get There" written. The production of the map brought with it some challenges, with Ely city pubs ultimately being shown on a clever insert. Pubs were listed in their areas in rough geographical sequence, and using the folds, enabled lists and map to be seen together. A printer was sourced, one that could also deal with the slightly complicated folding, and 2500 copies of the finished article, produced. The guide was lauched on 18th September, and was distributed, to all the locations included, plus hotels, museums, tourist info etc. The whole project, designed to campaign for CAMRA locally and nationally, was funded from surplus from our 2025 Elysian Winter Beer Festival. The aim is to update and reprint in future years, possibly with sponsorship. The 2026 Elysian Winter Beer Festival takes place in Ely Maltings from Thursday 5th to Sunday 7th February.

Phil Eden

The CAMRA Cambridge Beer Festival

How it all began.



CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971 by four young beer drinkers Graham Lees, Bill Mellor, Michael Hardman, and Jim Makin. Originally called the Campaign to Revitalise Ale - CAMRA -the movement opposed the growing mass production of beer and the homogenisation of the British brewing industry. It promoted the virtues and taste of cask conditioned Real Ale, and campaigned for it to be available in every pub. The campaign was very popular, and it wasn't long before a few enthusiasts had become thousands.

AD Hill (Cartoon)

CAMRA Cambridge Branch was founded in1973. The first recorded minutes were taken in December of that year when A.D Hill was in the Chair. It was a position that he shared with his wife, Sue, and generally they each chaired every other meeting

The possibility of organising the first CAMRA beer festival was proposed by Mr Peter Pearse sometime prior to the 15th of January 1974 meeting. It was during that meeting, held in the Panton Arms, Panton Street, Mr Pearse reported that the plan for a beer festival was ongoing, that it would feature as part of the annual Cambridge Festival celebration and that it had received support from both the (then) Cambridge Festival Committee and from CAMRA National Executive. However, members were warned that the festival "had to be successful". This was a significant warning. The non- CAMRA related Cambridge Festival Committee had tried to organise a beer festival in 1973 which had enjoyed little success. Members were told that "Both qualified and semi-skilled staff were required" to volunteer if the festival was to be a success.

That tradition continues to this day. With very few paid staff, CAMRA still relies on volunteers. Beer festivals could not run without them.

On February 12th, 1974, the CAMRA, Cambridge Branch met in the Village Rooms, Newton. Beer was supplied by The Queens Head, Newton. The Chair welcomed John Green who was CAMRA's first full-time employee. It was announced that the Campaign had reached 10,000 members.

Formal proposals for a beer festival had been sent to the Cambridge Festival Committee. Several breweries had been contacted and there had been "mostly" encouraging replies.

Tuesday, March 12th, 1974, the branch met in the Ancient Druids, which was then in Fitzroy Street, Cambridge. It was reported that twelve branch members had attended the CAMRA AGM which had been held in York. They had proposed that CAMRA introduce a Life Membership fee. It had been turned down, but the committee reported its confidence that it would eventually be available to those who could afford it.

Peter Pearse reported that detailed proposals for the beer festival had been rejected by the Cambridge Festival Committee on two grounds: a) the financial commitment, for which the Cambridge Festival committee refused to take even part responsibility, and b) the lack of a suitable venue.

The meeting agreed that CAMRA Cambridge

branch would take on the full financial commitment, and that they would seek suggestions for a suitable venue.

The next meeting, on 16th April 1974, was held in the Elm Tree, Orchard Street. It was chaired by Mrs S Hill.

Presumably reassured that they did not have to stump up any money, it was reported that The Cambridge Festival committee now gave their full approval to the event. However, branch had still not found a suitable venue. Clearly one needed to be found as soon as possible.

On Tuesday 21st May, two months before the festival was to take place, it was announced that a venue had been found. Cambridge Corn Exchange had agreed to hold the festival. It would run from 24th to 27th July and it would feature beer from 8 local breweries plus one German brew. The licence would be applied for in June. Volunteers were very much needed!

This began a partnership between the Corn Exchange and CAMRA Cambridge branch which produced an annual beer festival until the Corn Exchange closed for refurbishment in 1982.

On 16th July, in the Grapes, Histon Road, it was reported to the Chair Mrs S.V. Hill that "All preparations (are) well underway, and it (is) hoped that the beer festival (will)be a success".

Was it successful? History of course tells us it was. An article written by CAMRA historian and author Bob Flood suggests that more than half the beer was sold on the first day. The original plan to have only 8 breweries represented was certainly forgotten as an urgent resupply operation took place when the festival ran out of beer on the Wednesday evening. Our records show that at least 12 breweries were finally listed.

This success wasn't however reflected in the branch minutes. At least not in August, where a meeting held in the Barley Mow, Histon, with A. D. Hill back in the chair, heard nothing more than a thank you to the committee which had been proposed "from the floor".

There wasn't much of a mention recorded in September's meeting either. Held in the Plough and Fleece Horningsea, the minutes report that Elgoods brewery "has pledged support for the 1975 beer festival" should it occur.

It is not until the branch AGM held in Cambridge Guildhall on 19th November 1974, we can see a full record of how successful the beer festival had been when A.D. Hill announced that the beer festival had 'attracted 5000 people, 167 new (CAMRA) members were enrolled and £500.00 of CAMRA business was done.

It was by 1970's standards, a phenomenal success!

Peter Pearse, the first ever CAMRA beer festival organiser, was thanked for "his major contribution to the event."

Since then, the CAMRA Cambridge beer festival has grown beyond all expectations. After a brief stay with the Guildhall in 1984 and 1985, and the first outside event held on Midsummer Common in 1986, the festival returned to the Corn Exchange in 1987.

Soon the festival had outgrown the confines of walls, and 1991 was the last time the Cambridge Beer Festival was held indoors. 1992 saw the festival under canvas again, on Cambridge City Football Club's ground, just off Milton Road. The festival prospered and continued to grow and 2001 saw the 28th Cambridge Beer Festival move to Jesus Green. It remains there to this day.

The first CAMRA Cambridge Winter Festival, and the fore runner to this 2025 Winter beer festival, was called the Cambridge Festival of Ale and Cakes.

It took place in Coleridge Community College and was held in January 1986.

Over the years the Winter Beer Festival has been held in various city venues, including latterly the University Social Club, Mill Lane, Cambridge. Unfortunately, the Club could not survive the COVID lockdown, and the last festival was held there in 2019.

This year, rather fittingly, we are returning to the Corn Exchange, helping to celebrate its 150th anniversary. Arguably, it is the venue that saved the first ever CAMRA beer festival by opening its doors when a venue could not be found. In doing so, it helped to build the legacy which is the CAMRA Cambridge Beer Festival.

Three Beer Festivals

Three Beer Festivals in 3 days? Sounds a bit excessive. But it needn't be…

We are in **Ipswich** and it's a lovely summer day. **Briarbank Brewing** has its beer festival, with cask and kegs beers. It opens at 4pm and after a brief visit to Ipswich Town FC to say hello to the statues of Sir Bobby Robson; Sir Alf Ramsey and Kevin Beattie, we are the first to arrive. They don't even have the tills ready, but they serve us anyway. We must be desperate! Nicola has a Tarterus (Yorks) 8.4% keg shortbread stout called Talos which has a rich tan head clinging to the inside of the glass. It has a light licorice to it. Meanwhile I go for Briarbank Peach Pale, which tastes to me entirely not alcoholic despite being 4.0%. My second is one of our Locale beers! I must try Wheatsheaf (Huntingdon) Whippet, a "session" IPA (3.6%, £6/pint). This is amazingly crisp and FRESH hops abound, with a real peppery finish. I give this beer 3 stars in my notes, and I only go up to 3! Nicola only then goes to trump our Wheatsheaf beer with a half of Brew York Tonkoko, a 4.3% milk stout which is an explosion of vanilla and with subtle hints of coconut too. These are great beers; we are naturally very happy.

We are even more pleased when we go out of the marquee to the upstairs bar. This is a great setting for a drink or two, full of light but still quite cosy. We enter under the black horse sign, hinting that 12 years or so ago this taproom was a bank. Hundred cricket is quietly on TV in the background as Jordan Cox of the Oval Invincibles hits another six. All of the staff are so helpful! We finish our tastings with Briarbank Mocha Porter (4.5%, coffee hints) and Grapefruit IPA, also 4.5%, which is crisp and fruity as expected.

The **28th Clacton Beer Festival** runs at the same time as the brilliant air show which is attended by tens of thousands each August. Nicola and I have already been wowed by the incomparable Red Arrows who put on a good 20-minute show just off the front of the golden beach. A few more acrobatic shows and a visit from The Battle of Britain Memorial flight and we are ready for a few beers before catching the Greater Anglia train home.

There are about 60 ales on, but as we unhappily soon discover, many of the dark beers have already sold out. First up for me is our own local Milton Pegasus (4.1%). This is fantastic – fruity indeed quite honeyed, as bright a copper ale as you could possibly wish for (3 stars again!). Nicola goes for Milestone (Nottinghamshire, 4.3%) a slightly smoky vanilla led stout. Quite good but completely eclipsed by Nicola's second choice; Front Row (Staffs) Not Straight, a 4.5% banoffee pie chocolate milk stout. My second is Harveys (Sussex) Mild which at 3.0% doesn't actually do much for me today. My final pick is Abbeydale (S. Yorks) Through The Hopback Chinook; a fresh, fruity 4.0% ale. Nicola has another cracking dark beer: Brentwood (Essex) Porter, which at 4.8% is dry and full of smoky (char)coal character. We love this small festival. Most of the beers are in the £4.20 to £4.60 price bracket; bar snacks are reasonably priced too, with huge packs of pork scratchings (high in protein) at £1.20. The hall is a little run down and

could do with a lick of paint, but on the plus side at least we attend on the day that the local MP does not.

It is **Framlingham** today, a lovely little market town and home to a wonderfully preserved Norman castle; a couple of independent bookshops and several excellent pubs. Not to be confused with the outstanding Station Hotel (Earl Soham brewery beers) about 200 yards away,

The Railway Inn is hosting a small beer festival, but it nonetheless has considerable charm. Based in the large beer garden to the rear, there are 12 real ales on. I go for a Wild Craft Wild Norfolk IPA, which is served with a good foamy crown; bright and fresh with the dry hops. I enjoy the lightness and freshness of this 4.2% IPA. Nicola is driving today and gets her own Appletise from the main pub. I quickly move onto my second: Grain Red Nelson which is a really quite strong tasting ruby red bitter. On her travels Nicola discovers some disturbing information amongst the roses and hanging baskets. There is a display all about Storm Babet from October 2023, where The Railway Inn found itself in over two feet of flood water. It is amazing to sit here and see how this pub managed to survive. We raise our glasses. Back in the main bar we settle at a table next to a bookshelf packed with local magazines and guides. I chuckle to myself as I try to picture Lance and Andy, celebrated local detectorists, downing a pint while hunting for a bargain in the brilliantly titled "FramFare." Just time for one more, and it is Wild Craft Wild Stallion, a really pleasant 5% chocolate stout with some good hints of barley. Particularly impressive is that all the beers on offer are £4. The lady behind the bar says that they are priced like that "Because we want them all to sell." This makes good sense to us.

Three quite different beer festivals, different sizes, very different prices. We did quite a lot of walking in between all of these events and didn't drink at any time excessively. All very respectable then!

And here are the results of 18 beers over the three days:

1st: BREW YORK TONKOKO 2nd: MILTON PEGASUS 3rd: WHEATSHEAF WHIPPET We did not expect 2 of our local Cambs/Hunts beers to be in our list. A nice surprise.

Fred Laband

DYKE'S END

A Free House in the idyllic village of Reach
Specialising in the best **East of England ales**
Excellent Sunday Roast - booking essential
Beer garden overlooking the village green
Situated at one end of the Devil's Dyke walk
We are dog friendly too!

Dyke's End, 8 Fair Green, Reach, Cambs, CB25 OJD
E / dykesendpub@gmail.com
T / 01638 743816
Open: Tue - Fri 5pm-10pm, Sat 12pm-10pm,
Sun 12pm-9pm

Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

Well, Andrew Rowson had no difficulty identifying the latest mystery lost pub, the Gwydir Arms, Gwydir Street – because he lives there!

To be precise, he lives in the pink part of the building, which was the home of the final licensee, not the blue part, which was the pub 'proper'.

Andrew reports that while doing some work a few years ago he uncovered this old painted notice on the wall in the passageway between what was the pub and the landlord's house:

What caused it to be painted I don't know, as it seems to have been a well-run house for all of its life; but it may have something to do with a submission made by the Police to the licensing sessions in 1909, noting that several pubs (including in this area the Alexandra, the Gwydir Arms, the Dew Drop (now Cambridge Blue), the Durham Ox and the Locomotive) had back-ways that "gave facilities for illicit trading" and were therefore difficult to supervise. Owners were advised to take what steps they thought fit.

The story of the Gwydir Arms begins on 30 September 1868 when Richard Long, an agricultural labourer from Little Wilbraham, was granted an alehouse licence. (Incidentally, at the same meeting Emmanuel Dunn was granted the very first licence for the Live & Let Live.) This would make it the first pub on the newly built Gwydir Street, even if only by a couple of years.

Of Richard's time here there is no record or report, but after half a dozen years or so he returned to farming, and in the 1881 census he is a farm bailiff in Blofield, Norfolk. This caught my eye because two of my eight-ish-times-great-grandparents were married there a century before that, so he might have known some very distant relatives of mine.

Isaac Taylor's brief tenure in the mid-1870s has left almost no trace, and he was succeeded by James Porter, whose career over the previous decade had seen him in charge of the Six Bells, Covent Garden, and then the Crystal Palace on Mill Road. He spent about three or four years here before apparently giving up the licensed trade and moving to Sturton Street, where he earned a living as a gardener.

James Stimpson was another former farmer who thought he'd have a go at running a pub. But he only stuck it out for a couple of years before returning to work on the land.

And so we come to Thomas Holder, who took over in 1882. Now admittedly he only stayed here for about seven years, but we can forgive him that: he was 60 when he arrived, and had previously spent more than 30 years running the George IV on East Road, so the more relaxed pace of a backstreet boozer probably suited him better as he contemplated retirement. In 1889 he left the pub and moved just a few doors down, where he lived on quietly until his mid-80s.

The first properly long-term incumbent was James Utterage, publican and corn merchant, who held the reins for a quarter of a century. Besides his professional interests, he may also have been something of a pigeon-fancier, because pretty much as soon as he arrived, members of the dormant Excelsior Homing Society decided to meet there to discuss reviving the society. They made the Gwydir Arms their 'clubhouse', and were still going strong in 1900.

His tenure seems to have been largely

uneventful, aside from the uncertainty that the pub being put up for sale in March 1902 would bring. But for the pub historian a pub being advertised for sale is instantly attention-grabbing because it can provide information that would otherwise be lost to time. And this is no exception.

The advert announcing its sale in the Cambridge Daily News gives the following description:

> *"Behind the House is a Garden, in which is a long Timber built and Tiled Enclosed Shed and suitable Outbuildings.*
>
> *"The Property is well situate in a populous and growing district, and has an excellent trade for Beer and Spirits attached thereto. Let on lease, expiring at Michaelmas next."*

The annual rent, for those interested, was a whole £30. How times have changed…

It was picked up by Messrs Christmas and Company (of Haverhill) for £860, but shortly afterwards somehow found its way into the hands of the Rhadegund Brewery on James Street.

Utterage is last recorded at this address in 1906; subsequently he and his wife, Eliza, were residents of the Victoria asylum on Victoria Road. Interestingly, in the 1911 census he describes himself as a retired engineer's clerk, no mention of having been publican, but in 1921, now widowed, he says he is a retired publican. He died the following year.

And so probably sometime in late 1907 Mary Elizabeth Maltpress arrives. She brought with her a quarter of a century of experience in the trade, having run establishments in Ely with her two husbands – successively, not simultaneously!

Born Mary Elizabeth Mann in Reach, she first married Elijah Catchpole of Swaffham Prior. Together they ran the Wheel Inn, Broad Street, Ely, until Elijah's death in March 1891.

Almost immediately, it seems, she married James Maltpress, with whom she ran the Crown, Station Road, Ely. She also within a very short time (November of the same year) gave birth to a son, who we must assume is Elijah's posthumous offspring, although he bore the Maltpress name.

James died in 1907 and shortly afterwards, presumably looking for a change of scenery – and perhaps better luck with husbands – she turns up at the Gwydir Arms.

Mary has the dubious honour of being the only licensee of the Gwydir Arms to have been summonsed, for permitting drunkenness on the premises and for selling intoxicating liquor to a drunken person. Surely someone with all that experience wouldn't do such a thing! Well, let's see.

On the evening of 24 October 1908 one Milton John Rockett attracted the attention of a crowd, and the police, outside his sister-in-law's house because she wouldn't let him in. He was arrested and next day convicted of being drunk and disorderly.

He claimed that, aside from some beer earlier in the day, he had been off the drink for twelve months, but had gone to the Gwydir Arms at around seven o'clock with his brother Alfred, and stayed there till ten to eleven playing skittles and cards with Mary and her son for drinks. He estimated that he had had around seven pints of beer and stout, most if not all won by playing skittles, and was drunk when he left.

Well, this would certainly be a serious and licence-threatening matter. However a whole host of witnesses – including the very brother with whom he had been supposedly drinking all evening – told a very different story. In short, the brothers did not arrive until around 10.15, no skittles was played at all that evening, and the only game of cards was played between the landlady and her son. The two brothers arrived sober, stood at the counter for no longer than 40 minutes, shared a pint of half and half and a pint of stout, bought a bottle of stout to take out, and everyone testified that they had left almost as sober as they had arrived.

Two theories were suggested as to why Milton should have been arrested for being drunk a mere twenty minutes later. Alfred put the blame on a glass of whisky belonging to the son which Milton had taken while no one was looking and poured into his beer. A less generous alternative was voiced by one of the witnesses, namely that both men had a reputation, when in trouble, to put the blame on the publican, and that Arthur had

Lost pubs of Cambridge (continued)

concocted a similar story, even down to the playing of skittles, against another publican earlier that year.

With Milton's testimony in tatters, the charge of permitting drunkenness was dismissed. And as there was now no drunken person who could have been sold intoxicating liquor, the second charge was withdrawn.

Mary seems to have left in 1911, moving to Sturton Street and then York Terrace. Meanwhile, and probably not coincidentally, the pub was put up for sale yet again, along with stablemate the White Swan on Mill Road, when the Rhadegund Brewery closed. This must be when it was picked up by Bailey & Tebbutt, falling into Greene King's hands when they bought B&T in 1925.

Another Ely resident, George Emery, followed, but he enlisted in the 3rd Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1915 and is difficult to trace after that, though it seems he stayed in the Army into the 1920s at least.

Christopher James Newman was next. He was an Army veteran, having served with the Suffolk Regiment for 21 years, mostly abroad. His new civilian life looked to be cut short, however, when in 1918, at the age of 44, he was due to be called up – but not before 4 November. So it looks like he had a lucky escape there! Sadly his life was completely cut short four year later, as he died suddenly in February 1922.

His widow, Amelia, soldiered on (pun very much intended) at the pub for a further 15 years, by which time she was in her late 50s. Unfortunately, as she got older, trade began to decline. With Magistrates always on the lookout for supernumerary pubs that they could close, this put the pub in a precarious position. And so it happened that when the licence came up for renewal in 1938, questions were asked.

Not the best start for Hubert Northfield, then, who took the place on initially as a manager for twelve months while he decided whether to take it on as a tenant: he'd been there a mere six months and faced the prospect of the pub being closed as "surplus to requirements".

A Cambridge native, he had served in the Navy for 26 years, and was onboard HMS Arethusa on 11 February 1916 when she struck a mine and was disabled, drifted and wrecked in the North Sea. Some 11 men lost their lives, and the bodies of eight of them remain in the wreck, which is a protected war grave. Hubert, however, was uninjured and returned to Cambridge on furlough. He was later transferred to the submarine service in China before ending up in Cambridge hoping to start a new life in the licensed trade.

Greene King's Managing Director, Edward Lancelot Dew Lane, showed up in person to the Licensing Session to make the case for retaining the pub. Explaining the drop in trade he said:

> *"There is no doubt about it. Mrs. Newman (the former licensee) got old, and as she got old, the trade left the house. It is one of the difficulties we have to contend with. We don't want to get rid of widows but as they get old the trade goes down. I have seen it time and time again."*

He went on to say that they had offered Mrs Newman 10s a week for life if she were to give up the house. This she did, and since the arrival of the new manager trade had begun to increase. He also pointed out that some £1200 pounds had been spent over the previous ten years in improving the place, making it now in his opinion "one of the prettiest houses in Cambridge". Further improvements were planned. All this investment would be lost if the house had to be given up.

It would appear that this intervention saved the day and the licence was eventually renewed. Sadly, though, Hubert didn't live to enjoy it, dying suddenly in March 1939 at the tender age of 42.

His widow Lily Marie couldn't wait to get out, it seems (was she also offered 10s a week for life?), and so Edward Ernest Sandwell turns up three months later.

Edward didn't have the best start in life. Born in London, his father died when he was about 3 and he entered the workhouse shortly afterwards. By

the age of 7 he was an inmate of the West London District School, and wound up in the Navy. Here he flourished, reaching the rank of Chief Petty Officer by the outbreak of the First World War. Before it was over he had been awarded the Good Conduct Medal and the Distinguished Service Medal, and was Mentioned in Despatches.

By way of contrast, he saw out the Second World War in the relative quiet of the Gwydir Arms, moving in just before war broke out, and dying two months after VE Day. His widow Maud continued for another two or three years.

The final name over the door was that of Ernest William Gent, a lorry driver by trade, who took over from Maud in 1948. He didn't have to come very far: he only lived next door!

After he retired in 1956 the pub disappears from the directories so presumably Greene King just closed it without fanfare.

Next up a really old one:

No one will remember it when it was a pub, but

I'm sure lots of people will recognise the building, and might even know what it used to be called.

I'll close with another plug for Bob Tonks' latest book, Chesterton Pubs up to 1911, which I now have a copy of and can recommend. If you want a copy, get in touch at pub-history@cambridge-camra.org.uk and I'll pass the message on.

And don't forget the Cambridge Pub History Facebook group. Cheers!

Steve Linley

- Nine Cask Ales
- Home cooked food
  Mon-Sat 12-9pm, Sun 12-8pm
- Pizza Shed Open Wed-Sun
  5-9pm, Eat in or Takeaway
- Four high quality en-suite rooms in tranquil and secluded area
- Free Wi-Fi
- Annual beer festival - The Histon Beer Festival (Early September)

Eat
Drink
Sleep

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2026 WE'RE IN IT

RED LION FREEHOUSE

27 High Street, Histon, Cambridge
CB24 9JD (01223 564437)
www.theredlionhiston.co.uk
theredlionhiston

Apples and Pears

We're now coming to the end of the harvesting season for apples and pears, which is one of the busiest periods in the cider maker's calendar. This year has seen a bumper crop of fruit, due in the main to a very dry spring followed by a long and hot summer – sugar levels have gone through the roof!

I've been out and about fruit picking with Emma and Leo of the Blue Barrel cidery. I've ached in places that I didn't know could ache – it is a young person's game, certainly not for somebody hurtling towards their seventies!

However, it was all worthwhile and I'm already looking forward to sampling the results of all that toil when the new ciders appear next spring.

But this year is not quite over yet… we have still got The Cambridge CAMRA Winter Beer Festival to contend with, taking place in The Corn Exchange between the 10th and 13th of December. There will be cider!

Cambridge CAMRA Winter Beer Festival
Cambridge Corn Exchange 10th – 13th December 2025

The ciders and perries bar at the festival is being run by local cider makers. We can expect a good selection, at least 20, of locally produced beverages plus a few interesting ciders and perries from outside of our area. A detailed list of ciders can be found in the festival programme, but to give you a taster:

Cider makers represented are:
Hesketh Cider – Guilden Morden
Foxhay Cider - Rampton
Wriggers Cider – Saffron Walden
Blue Barrel -Oakington
CydeFX - Ipswich
Simon's Cider -Cambridge
Cambridge Cider Company - Bassingbourn
Duxford Scrumpy Company - Duxford
Cromwell's Cider- Hemingford Grey
Toye's Cider Company- Downham Market
Udders Cider - Lindley, Huddersfield

… plus, we'll be offering a nicely warmed mulled cider to help keep the wolf from the door if the weather is rather inclement.

We look forward to seeing you at some stage during the festival – Wassail!

Jerry Ladell

A.I. is too important to be left in the hands of machines

The A.I. we're referring to isn't Artificial Intelligence, it's Ale Intelligence, of course. We're not technophobes, we just don't trust anything incapable of smelling, feeling or tasting to create something as delicately balanced as Landlord. That's why we have five hands-on, Heriot-Watt trained brewers involved in every step of the process, from barley delivery to filling the casks. This way, we can make sure that every sip of Taylor's is as delicious as humanly possible. Machines may one day take over the world, just be thankful you won't be around to drink their terrible beer.

All for that taste of Taylor's

TIMOTHY TAYLOR'S LANDLORD

The Blue Moon Music, Beer, Pizza, Gin

2 Norfolk Street, Cambridge
CB1 2LF

Opening Times; Monday-Wednesday 4pm-midnight, Thursday 4pm-1am, Friday 4pm-2am, Saturday 2pm-2am, Sunday 2pm-10.30pm

(01223) 500238
cambridge.pub/blue-moon
bluemooncambridge

THE Royal Standard
RE-ESTABLISHED 2015

Cambridge CAMRA City LocAle Pub of the Year 2024, Cambridge CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2023

Opening Hours: Monday-Saturday noon-11pm, Sunday noon-10.30pm. Food Served Everyday from noon until 9.30pm

Home of Cambridge's largest selection of draught Belgian beer, Real Cider, local and regional Real Ale and UK craft beer.

Working with the original TZATZIKI to provide Cambridge with the best Greek street food.

292 Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 3NL
cambridge.pub/royal-standard
01223 5669065

Paws for thought - The wonderings of a pub going dog

Only a morsel of writing from me this month. You'll notice that I am a little short haired.

That's because my humans decided I was suffering during the summer heatwave and arranged to have me trimmed. I don't really like it. I was born to be a shaggy dog, but I must admit I did feel better. My coat is growing back, and by the next issue of ALE I should be back to my old self.

On a recent CAMRA pub tour I was approached by a pub landlady who remarked that the dog featured on the CAMRA Cambridge Winter Beer Festival poster looks very much like me. I assured her that it was me – ok, a caricature of me, and nowhere near as pretty! The Beer Festival is being held in the Corn Exchange, Cambridge from 10th – 13th December this year.

The Corn Exchange isn't dog friendly, but I am hoping that they will let me take my usual role of meeting people on the membership stand, which will be in the foyer before you get to the main hall.

My first picture is taken in the Comrades Club, Godmanchester. We visited the club when it was hosting the CAMRA Booze on the Ouse beer festival back in December Claire and Caron were so pleased to meet me, and I was pleased to meet them too!

In this picture I am saying farewell to my friend Josh. He is leaving his job in the Three Horseshoes in Stapleford and is moving, I think he said, to Manchester. Regular customers in the ' shoes asked me to let him know how much we will all miss him.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a bonetiful new year!

Gladys Emmanuelle

THE KINGSTON ARMS
"The City Local"

- Draught Bass, Tring Side Pocket, Osset White Rat plus up to five changing guest beers
- Two dark cask beers always available, one usually Batemans Dark M
- Draught German beers, four real ciders and changing 'Craft' beers
- Free WiFi
- Our handcrafted Pork Pies are probably ...

Crib & Skittle players always wanted

33 Kingston Street, Cambridge CB1 2NU

Monday-Saturday 11:00-23:00 (Friday 23:30), Sunday 12:00-22:30

info@thekingstonarms.co.uk

(01223) 323962

thekingstonarms.co.uk

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2026 WE'RE IN IT

BISHOP NICK

FESTIVE ALES

BISHOP NICK
MIRTH
DEEP GOLD 3.4% ABV
LIMITED EDITION

BISHOP NICK
NOËL
AMBER 4% ABV
LIMITED EDITION

BISHOP NICK
REJOICE
DEEP COPPER ALE
5.6% ABV
LIMITED EDITION

BISHOPNICK.COM

NOW AVAILABLE
CALL TO ORDER
01376 349 605

The Three Tuns
Fen Drayton

Hunters Lodge

for all occasions

for large parties | with a bar | fully heated | Log burner

book through our website or by telephone

www.threetunsfendrayton.co.uk